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AUTHOR Carter, Thomas P.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

One of the primary aims of a 6-week experimental inservice institute on race relations was to sensitize participants--i.e., to enable them "to restructure existent attitudes and internalize new ones." A study was designed to determine (1) the degree of attitudinal change which actually occurred (as indicated by the Rokeach Scale of Dogmatism, a measure of open- and closed-mindedness in both participants and group-leaders), and (2) the factors (particularly the attitudes of group leaders) which may have influenced whatever change occurred in either direction. Results of the study indicate that "the increasingly popular use of 'sensitivity training' and its techniques of behavior modification are not accompanied by concomitant enthusiastic change in the participants. While it is true that some individuals benefit (i.e., become more liberal or understanding), others apparently do not change, and others actually retreat into even more rigid positions." Application of the McNemar Test for the Significance of Change to the response patterns of five groups to five different leaders (since group-leader characteristics was the only factor which seemed to have any impact at all on change) indicated, among other things, that those leaders who were strongest in effecting change, effected changes in both directions. (Author/ES)

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The Effects of Dogmatic and Non-Dogmatic Leaders on Teachers Attending a Race Relations Seminar

Thomas P. Carter, University of Texas at El Paso
Edward J. Casavantes, Southwestern Cooperative Educational Laboratory
C. Ray Fowler, Claremont, California

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THE EFFECTS OF DOGMATIC AND NON-DOGMATIC LEADERS ON TEACHERS ATTENDING A RACE RELATIONS SEMINAR

This is a partial report of a six-week-long experimental In-Service Institute conducted during the summer of 1966. Teachers volunteered to undergo this non-traditional program, non-traditional insofar as it was not "knowledge-centered," or lecture-type. The program was aimed at "sensitizing" staff members or achieving a "reconstruction of their experience world," this in contradistinction to cognitive learning only. The assumption was that if teachers were successful in internalizing new attitudes or new affective components, then this would imply restructuring their own attitudes as these would be subject to new appraisals. The Institute expected to demonstrate that ethnicity, culture, culture change, and social behavior were understandable phenomena and that to understand these the teachers' own values, beliefs, and attitudes had to also be reexamined.

The 81 participants were given an extraordinarily large number of tests, attitude surveys, and were asked to fill out a vary large number of items dealing with demographic characteristics. Altogether, a total of 45 different assessment items were given. We are reporting here on only two of the many hypotheses examined.

The teachers in the Institute were asked to participate in standard lecture sessions, in discussions of current ongoing desegregation problems in the community, to do library research, to visit sites where ethnic and poverty children lived, and some were even asked to have "live-ins." In addition

to this there were attempts to carry out sensitivity training sessions. All-in-all, it was an exceedingly thorough and intensive 6-week Institute.

The main instrument in the present study was the Rokeach Scale of Dogmatism. Rokeach, in his book, "The Open and Closed Mind," (1960), feels that his scale taps an ideologic orientation of individuals related to their basic personality functioning, their thought processes, and their general behavior. Specifically, this scale is designed to tap what he calls "closed mindedness" or it's polar opposite "open mindedness." A dogmatic individual would be one who would score high, representing a cognitive network of defense against anxiety. Thus, higher degrees of closed-mindedness are alleged to reduce anxiety, but, in turn, this reduces the flexibility, realism, and interpretation of new information available to the person and inhibits assimilation of new information into the person's belief system. Thus, "the closed system is nothing more than the total network of psychoanalytic defense mechanisms organized together to form a cognitive system and design to shield the vulnerable mind." (Rokeach, p. 70).

Individuals who have high scores are known to be rigid, punitive, and authoritarian themselves. The close-minded individual is also unable to express emotionally ambivalent feelings toward his parents.

These findings give us clues as to the main character defenses of the dogmatic person. It appears that the mechanism of reaction formation and denial are operative. The denial of the ambivalence toward the parents will automatically

lead the individual to accept those parts of his parents which were pleasant, but he also should "accept as nice" those hostile and rejecting aspects of the parent. In doing so, he accepts all of the parts of his parent(s), but has to convert the parents' hostility and rejection into something "good." The hostility is then often converted cognitively on the basis of its "being good for me." Further, it appears that these individuals easily ally themselves with almost any brand of leader, just so long as the leader will make the decisions and permit unquestioning followers to come along. This lack of questioning is seen then, theoretically, as a parallel to the lack of questioning of the behavior of the hostile and rejecting parent.

In addition, the dogmatic person is further described by Rokeach as an individual with many feelings of isolation, anxiety and helplessness. He interprets the environment as hostile and dangerous, and his own future as uncertain. Because he feels helpless to cope with such a world, he interprets any sign of changing, novel or innovative events as threatening. Other characteristics of the closed-mind are a great tendency to premature closure of perceptual processes and more difficulty in remembering new information and new beliefs, especially those which are antagonistic to his own belief system.

Briefly, the low scorer is described by Rokeach as possessing greater flexibility and responsiveness in his reception and integration of new data and evidence. He is more able to evaluate evidence on its own merits and to distinguish between the message itself and its source. He needs less reliance on authority to tell him how to act, how to feel, and how to evaluate. Rokeach feels that one of the most important characteristics of the individual with an open mind is his ability to possess a greater tolerance for ambiguity.

The Rokeach scale was administered under pre- and post-test basis with the six-weeks Institute in between. The pre-test score of 107.7 was followed by a post-test score of 109.8 yielding a different score of 2.1 which is obviously non-significant.

A second hypothesis, one which bears more directly on the present title, related to the characteristics of the leaders themselves. We examined many variables which would seem to affect the rise and fall of scores. We could find little or no effect these had on the Rokeach scores. These were: (a) the structure of the seminar, (b) the opportunity to verbalize anxiety by the teachers, (c) the degree of seminar group identity, (d) the amount or degree of exposure to field visits to slums or ethnic areas, (e) the contact with cultural and racial groups, and (f) the pressure from the staff and from the program itself. It is our finding that the only thing that seemed to have any impact at all on the attitudinal change of the teachers was the characteristic of the Leader of the group. Each group began and maintained a single Leader throughout the six weeks.

It was the tacit assumption of the research team that the personalities of the various Leaders was sufficiently different to affect varying degrees of change. The scores reflecting gain from the pre-test to the post-test for each of the Seminar Leaders (identified by Roman Numerals) is as follows:

Seminar Leader	Gain of Corresponding Seminar Group
I	4.4
II	1.8
III	2.6
IV	.6
V	5.4

We had also anticipated that there would be some teachers who would "lose" points rather than gain points on the Rokeach scores. That is, their Rokeach post-test scores would actually be lower after the six-week intervention. Actually, roughly half of the teachers either did not meaningfully gain any points whatever, or actually lost points. The actual distribution is as follows:

18 Neither gained or lost more than 1 point
21 Were "Losers"
43 Were "Gainers"

However, the Losers did not lose as much as the Gainers gained, as one would expect from a slight total net gain. In terms of averages, for every <u>two</u> teachers who gained--an average each of 8.3 points--there was <u>one</u> who lost--an average of 5.6. As was suggested above, we were looking for change in any direction, that is, we were looking for mere change alone.

Using a non-parametric statistical model, the McNemar Test for the Significance of Change (Siegel, pp. 63-67), it was possible to test the hypothesis that <u>mere change</u> had occurred. This test describes whether <u>any change</u> occurs by simple chance alone and whether this change occurs <u>both</u> with some pattern <u>and</u> with sufficient dimensional strength. The test yields a Chi-Square, and in this case the value of the Chi-Square was 6.89, with 1 d.f., which is significant above the .02 level of confidence. (See Table No. I.)

It was also possible to apply the same McNemar test for the Significance of Change to the response patterns of each of the five different groups associated with each of the Seminar Leaders. Our hypothesis was that certain Seminar

Leaders would be more effective in effecting change, and we predicted in advance that the Seminar Leaders would be I, V, III, II, IV, with I having the largest amount of change, and IV, the least.

The McNemar test yielded five Chi-Squares. These appear below.

Leader	Chi-Square	Level of Significance (All with 1 d.f.)
I	42.66	p: less than .001*
II	14.54	p: less than .001*
V	.94	p: less than .40
III	.75	p: less than .40
IV	.00	p: not applicable

(See Table II.)

It appears that the two Leaders who previously had been selected (on a subjective basis) to effect the most change actually did so. And that the other three Leaders, although they produced non-significant change, actually validated the prediction also, for they produced change comensurate with the anticipated amount.

As can be seen from Table III, the Leaders created change, and in both directions. The greatest change was made by Leader V. In causing the greatest amount of gain, however, Leader V also caused the greatest amount of loss. The opposite is true of Leader II, who had the least amount of gain, and had a concomitant least amount of loss. An inspection of Table II will show that, with the non-significant reversals of Leaders IV and I on losses, the pattern of the Leaders with regard to gains becomes the mirror-image with regard to losses.

This phenomenon is interpreted in terms of the common-sense notion of a "negativistic reaction." By very strongly advocating a liberal position,

some Leaders caused some to become "followers" of them; but they also caused others to retrench into even more "close-minded" positions, as Rokeach would say, than they had previously held.

The implications of this can be seen easily. For example, we know that change of deep-seated attitudes, such as those dealing with prejudice, come slowly and must emerge "from within" the person. We also have some everyday observations that those political leaders who have a large popular following also often have a great number of "enemies." Perhaps, then, this study is but a more controlled documentation of these informal observations.

A third inference to be made revolves about the finding that "Cultural Awareness" or "Sensitivity Training" programs may not effect as much change as is usually believed. The increasingly popular use of these techniques of behavior modification is not accompanied by concomitant enthusiastic change in the participants. While it is true that some individuals benefit (i.e., become more liberal or understanding), others apparently do not change, and others actually retreat into even more rigid positions. If we were to be asked for one suggestion, it would be that a combination of the cognitive and the affective would have a greater possibility of success than either one alone, but even this suggestion is open to empirical verification.

Guilford, J. P., & Zimmerman, W. S. The Guilford-Zimmerman temperament survey: Manual of instructions and interpretations. Beverly Hills: Sheridan Supply Co., 1949.

Rokeach, M. The Open and closed mind. New York: Basic Books, 1960.

Siegel, S. Nonparametric statistics. New York: McGraw-Hill., 1956.

TABLE #1

TOTAL INDIVIDUALS WHO GAINED OR LOST POINTS FROM THE PRE-TEST TO THE POST-TEST. VALUES ARE FOR ALL GROUPS COMBINED

MCNEMAR TEST FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGE

	-	+
+	A 21	B 10
-	C 8	D 43

FREQUENCIES IN EACH CELL REVEAL WHETHER AN INDIVIDUAL EITHER GAINED (CELL D) OR LOST (CELL A) OR ESSENTIALLY DID NEITHER (CELLS B AND C). THIS TEST YIELDS A CHI-SQUARE.

THE FORMULA FOR THIS TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:

$$X^2 = \frac{(A-D \quad -1)^2}{A + D}$$

The above formula yields the following results:

$X^2_{tot} = 6.89$, with 1 d.f.

p is less than .02.

TABLE II

AMOUNT OF CHANGE BY DISCUSSION LEADER AND CORRESPONDING GROUP

I

	-	+
+	A 3	B 1
-	C 0	D 12

$X^2_I = 42.66^*$

p: less than .001

II

	-	+
+	3	3
-	2	8

$X^2_{II} = 14.54^*$

p: less than .001

III

	-	+
+	4	2
-	2	8

$X^2_{III} = .75$

p: less than .40

IV

	-	+
+	5	3
-	3	4

$X^2_{IV} = 00$

p: (not applicable)

V

	-	+
+	6	1
-	1	11

$X^2_V = .94$

p: less than .40

Table showing the amount of change by Leader and Corresponding Section.

(* - Statistically significant beyond the .001 level of confidence.)

Table III

ROKEACH DIFFERENCE SCORES

Points Gained

12

10

8

6

4

2

0

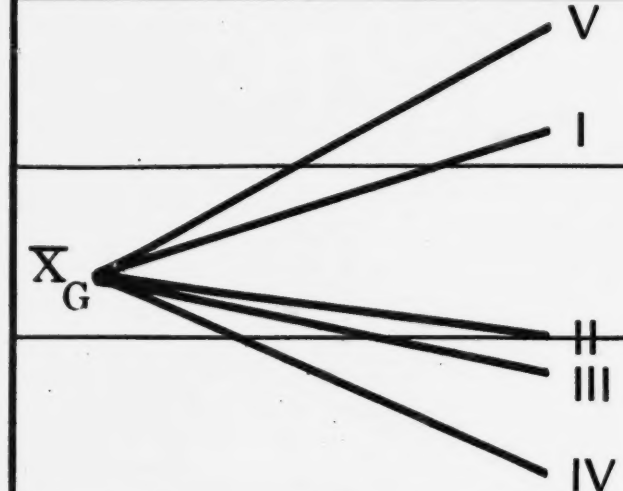
-2

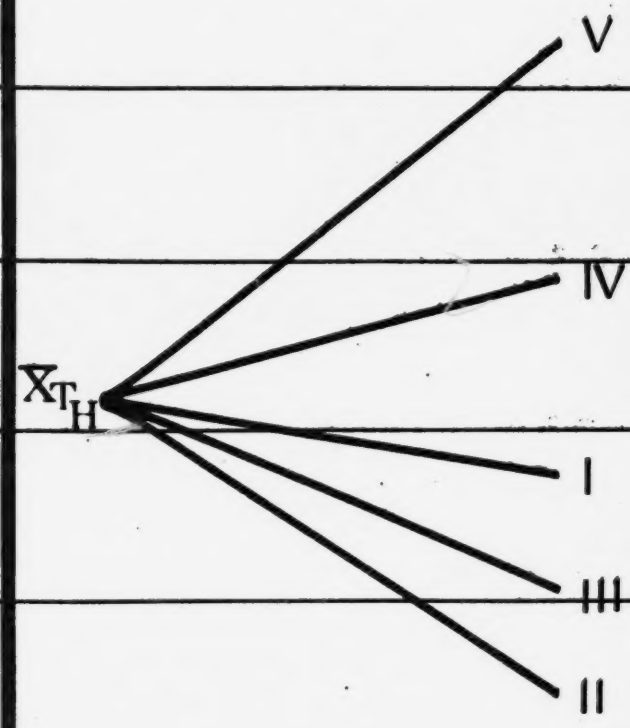
-4

-6

-8

Points Lost





Grand Mean of All Scores (+,−,or 0) Combined (Left), and for Each Lecturer (Right)

Mean of All Gainers (Above) and of All Losers (Below) Compared with the Mean of Each Lecturer